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XXXIII

THE TALENSE

History; Tribal, Clan, and Soog' *Organization*

INTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talena; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole group', who seem to

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NAMNAM

XXXVIII

THE NAMNAM

History, Tribal and Clan Organization

THE Namnam (*Anglice* Nabdams) are a tribe numbering 8,063. They inhabit the triangular strip of country bounded on the east by the Red Volta; the Talense lie to the south, the Nankanse on the west. They are among the smallest of the Northern Territory tribes. The people call themselves Namnam (sing. Nabt), the language Nabte, and their country Nabrug. The Namnam call the Kasena, Yuls, and the Nankanse, Gurse; the Kanjagas, Bulse, and the Mampruse and Dagomba, Dagbwan. Specimens of the Nabte language have been given in Chapter III.

The capital town (*teya*) of the head Chief is Nangoot (*Anglice* Nangode). The following history was given me by the head Chief: 'Our first ancestors were called *Loro* and *Zan*. *Zan* is the name of a tree which was this ancestor's *segere*. There was a quarrel about the Chieftainship at Naleruk (Naleregu, near Gambaga) and these ancestors of ours, who were full brothers, left Gambaga and first settled near a place called Gos, in the Kusase country. There was nothing but thorn scrub there, so the place was named Namgoel, "the Chieftainship of thorns". We quarrelled with the Kusase and came here and gave the place its name. When we came here, we found a people who had not any Chiefs, only *Ten'danam* (*Ten'dama*). They spoke the language now called Nabte. Our people followed *Loro*, and *Zan* became the first Chief. He died and is buried here. The people whom we overtook here, we called Namnam. We became their Chiefs. We own the people, the *Ten'danam* own the land. The present *Ten'dan'* is called Biriwanab, his grove (*tengwan*) is known as Dakyirig. The *Ten'dan'* makes sacrifices to the land. *Ten'danam* are like your European doctors. *Zan* was succeeded by *Dyeten*. I think he was *Zan's* son, but it is a long time ago. Each Chief when he dies has a stone which is bathed, rubbed over with shea butter, and kept in the compound of the new Chief in a room. These stones are called *kpwim kuga* (spirit-stones). A sacrifice is made once a year to them. *Dyeten* was succeeded by *Pubuge*. During his time, we heard that the black gun-men (Ashanti?) came with war and reached Akorog (lit. the River). We met them with arrows and had many men taken captive.

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Kusase

XXXIX

THE KUSASE

Tribal and Clan Organization. The Tenedan'

THE Kusase are a large tribe, numbering over 40,000, which inhabits the extreme north-eastern corner of the Northern Territories. They also extend across the border into the mandated territory of Togoland. The people call themselves *Kusase*, singular *Kusa*, and their language *Kusal*.[1] Specimens of this dialect have been given in previous chapters. They do not apply the name Gurense to themselves as do the Nankanse.

Clans: The word used in the vernacular is *budi*. A son acquires the clan of his father. Here, for the first time, we encounter a departure from the more common practice of using the totem name to designate the clan. A Kusa, if asked his clan, will give the name, not of its totem, but of the male ancestor from whom all his fellow-clansmen trace descent. On inquiring further, he will then state what is his clan taboo. This departure from the usual practice will also be noted later on among the Lobi. Here again, we find particular clans grouped in certain towns, town again having the meaning of 'area' or 'settlement' rather than township in the commonly accepted sense. The following table illustrates the above.

Town.	*Clan.*	*Clan Taboo.*
Gagbir.[2]	Zuos.	*Waf tetar* (lit. big snake i.e. python).
Garu.	Nabt.	*Sur.* (The heart of any animal).
Kugri.	Nabt.	*Sur.* (The heart of any animal).
Timpale.	Nabt.	*Tunig* (a kind of fish with sharp teeth).
Pusig.	Zuos.	Python.

The towns of Bindur, Bugur, Zabuk, Timpan, Bawk' also contain a number of Zuos clansmen. Bawk (Bawku)[3] are really Mampruse, not

[1] Kusal is so much like Mole that an officer learned the former language by mistake for the latter and was duly examined by a language board and passed, much to the amusement of critics of the said board. They had, however, every excuse for doing so, the laugh really being against those who, because these languages had different names, thought they were not related. Curiously enough, however, Kusase and Moshi do not intermarry (see p. 390).

[2] *Anglice* Kagbiri.

[3] The *Tenedan'* is, however, a Zuos.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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to another, ranging from 25 inches to 45 inches per annum, but fluctuations occur from year to year in the same area. Erratic or abnormal rains may so disturb the cycle of food production as to subject a majority of the population to severe privation. The temperature in the vicinity of 10° 30′ N. latitude and 0° 30′ W. longitude varies from a minimum of about 70° F. to a maximum of about 93° F. A characteristic feature of the dry season is the harmattan, a hot parching wind laden with fine dust which blows from the Sahara, so strongly at times as to obscure the landscape in a haze which limits visibility to a few hundred yards. Heavy dew and mists cause the mornings to be chilly and bracing, so much so that the natives squat shivering round fires or remain indoors until the sun is high; from the forenoon until about 4 p.m. the sun blazes relentlessly through the faint haze; sunset ushers in a cool and balmy evening; and night brings a relatively marked drop in temperature. Violent nocturnal tornadoes from the east and north-east, accompanied by lightning and thunder, introduce the rainy season, during which the prevailing wind blows from the direction of the Gulf of Guinea, to the south and south-east. During this season the temperature remains fairly stable throughout the day. Though it is never as hot as in the hottest days of the dry season, the humidity makes it at times excessively oppressive. The peak of the rains comes in August–September. It rains so heavily then that many social activities are impeded. These conditions of vegetation and climate fundamentally influence the economy and the social life of the inhabitants of the Sudanese Zone.

This book is concerned with the population of a very small section of the Sudanese Zone, a part of the region drained by the Volta river system. The head-waters of this system lie in French West Africa. About 20 miles south of the international boundary between the Gold Coast and French Ivory Coast, which has been arbitrarily fixed to coincide approximately with the eleventh parallel N. latitude, the Red Volta flows into the White Volta. Between these two rivers, on the east and south respectively, and the Sissili river on the west lies an area, arbitrarily truncated on the north by the international boundary, comprising two of the most heavily populated administrative districts of the Gold Coast. The eastern third of this area constitutes the administrative district of Zuarungu, the remaining two-thirds the district of Navrongo. The Red Volta separates Zuarungu district from another administrative unit, Kusasi, and the White Volta forms a natural boundary between it and the Mamprusi district, to the south of which lies the territory of the Dagomba.

As the following table[1] from the census of 1931 shows, the Zuarungu district is the most densely populated part of this area; and as the population tends to be concentrated in the centre and north, the actual density of settlement exceeds the figures given. In some localities this is reflected

[1] See *Appendices containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census*, Gold Coast, 1932, p. 3; and Cardinall, A. W., *The Gold Coast*, 1931, Population Map, p. 156. Mr. Cardinall remarks (p. 123) that 'A majority of the census officers were of opinion that the figures collected by them are lower than they should have been by from 2 per cent. to 10 per cent.'—a contingency inevitable in a country which is for the most part still pre-literate.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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in serious soil erosion due to over-cultivation and in the diminution of uncultivated bush land, so that firewood and other sylvan products cannot be found within six or more miles of the settlements.

District	Area	Population	Density per sq. mile
Navrongo . .	1,551	120,870	77·96
Zuarungu . .	781	133,981	171·55
Kusasi* . .	1,227	151,715	123·64
Mamprusi* .	2,719	61,520	22·62
Dagomba* . .	12,257	191,956	15·66

* Partly in Mandated Territory of Togoland.

In spite of the general similarity of climate and vegetation in the Sudanese Zone, local variations produce significant ecological differences. This is shown in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast by the differences in agriculture north and south of the Gambaga scarp. The steep scarp marks both a geological and an ecological line of division. South of it the rock formations are of sandstone and shale, north of it granite, quartz, and greenstone predominate. South of the scarp a form of shifting cultivation is customary, and yams (*Dioscorea* spp.) are grown on a large scale side by side with millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*, var.), guinea corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), and maize (*Zea mays*). North of it yams will not grow easily and cereal crops form the staple food supply.[1]

The relative scarcity of population in the yam-growing districts compared with the congested areas north of the White Volta may be due to unknown historical and cultural factors, but endemic diseases have undoubtedly impeded population growth. While malaria, yaws, and leprosy, to mention only the commonest enemies of native health, are widespread throughout the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, sleeping-sickness is also endemic throughout the Mamprusi and Dagomba districts. In the central sectors north of the scarp sleeping-sickness occurs only sporadically near the rivers.

Topographical differences also appear to influence the distribution of population. The high plateau which stretches from the White Volta northwards is more suited for permanent habitation than the low-lying flats which make up the greater part of Mamprusi and Dagomba. In the wet season they turn into quagmires, in the dry season they are arid tracts seriously short of water-supplies. North of the White Volta numerous streams and small rivers combine with the relatively greater elevation to drain the plateau effectively during the heavy rains; and though surface water becomes scarce in the dry season, shallow pits generally provide sufficient water for normal needs.

The district of Zuarungu is a typical portion of the Trans-Volta plateau. A number of bouldery hills from 100 to 500 feet high are scattered over its undulating surface. The most conspicuous are the Tong Hills, a small range stretching for about four miles just north of the river. It adds an

[1] Cf. Fortes, M. and S. L., 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, ix. 2, 1936; and Lynn, C. W., op. cit.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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attractive touch to an otherwise uninspiring landscape. A fringe of uninhabited bush, the home of a fair amount of game, follows the course of the two Voltas. From the Tong Hills the area of close settlement and perennial cultivation spreads out like a fan to the west, north, and east. Generally speaking, settlement is relatively sparse and recent along the periphery of this area, except in the north to north-west segment, and densest and most ancient in the middle.

The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast have been under effective Government control for about twenty-five years. From the first efforts were made to develop modern communications. At the present time a main road, suitable for motor traffic, connects Bawku in Kusaasi district, the northernmost administrative station, with Tamale, the capital of the Northern Territories, 145 miles to the south, and continues from there to Kumasi in Ashanti, another 220 miles. Branches link it with the principal Government stations in the Northern Territories. This road system was maintained, until recently, only for essential services in the wet season, but was always passable in the dry season. In 1936 large-scale works were undertaken to make it a permanent highway. Head carriage and footpaths still remain the only means of local transport and communications. About 50 miles of this road system traverse the Zuarungu district, the administrative head-quarters of which is at Zuarungu (Talni, *Zuwarug*) on the central road.

The people we are concerned with in this book occupy less than half of the Zuarungu district. Their country, which, for convenience of reference may be called Taleland, embraces most of the southern half of the district between the two Voltas and the western boundary. On the north it can be demarcated only by an arbitrary boundary which extends in a wavy line from Zuarungu due east to the river. A typical section of the district, Taleland includes the Tong Hills, the vicinity of which harbours the densest and oldest settlements of the country. Its total population, according to the 1931 census, numbers about 35,000. Nearly a third of it is concentrated within a radius of two or three miles of the Hills. I estimate the total area of Taleland at about 300 square miles, which would imply an average population density of approximately 100 to the square mile, though the actual density of settlement in the inhabited areas must be considerably higher. Thus Taleland is thickly populated, by African standards.

Cultural Affinities of the Tallensi

Delafosse, in his monumental survey[1] of the peoples of the western Sudan, distinguished five 'families' by ethnological and linguistic criteria. His largest division, the Voltaic family, comprises the tribes inhabiting the basin of the Volta rivers, from approximately 9° 30′ to 14° N. latitude.[2] Delafosse subdivides the Voltaic family into seven branches, one of which, the Mossi group, includes all the peoples living between Ouagadougou in the French Upper Ivory Coast and Salaga in the Gold Coast.

More recent research has not invalidated Delafosse's broad classification.

[1] Delafosse, M., *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, 3 vols., 1912.
[2] Op. cit., i, pp. 115 ff.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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continue through Sie-Tɛndaaŋ or Namɔyalug to Gban, Gar, and Kpatia or to Buug, Duusi, Datɔk, and beyond to Pieluŋ and Nanǵodi with scarcely a break in the continuity of settlement.

In addition to these two main blocks of settlements—let us call them, for convenience, the Tongo district and the Sie district—there are scattered Tale settlements, separated from them and from one another by stretches of bush, between them and the Volta rivers—Namooraana, Diga'ar, Tola, Kumbude, Biuŋ, and Gbiug-on-the-river being the most important. But other settlements on the frontiers of Taleland, the inhabitants of which are not recognized as Tallensi by outsiders, also fall into the framework of their political geography.

The first puzzle a stranger must unravel, if he hopes to understand the life of our people, is the apparent contradiction between the density of residential aggregation and the cleavages underlying their social relations. He will meet it latent in simple and casual occurrences, or conspicuously overt in organized collective events such as the communal hunting and fish drives, the Great Festivals, or other ceremonial gatherings.

Taleland is thickly populated. The Tongo district alone has a population of over 12,000 according to the 1931 census. This area of ancient habitation—*tɛŋ kərəg*, an old country, as the natives describe it—has supported a sedentary population for a period which cannot be less than several centuries. Sacrifices are made on graves of ancestors said to have lived ten or eleven generations ago. No one familiar with the people would doubt the authenticity of these graves; but the three centuries or so of settlement this implies must, I believe, be considered a minimum period. Centuries of intermarriage have woven a web of kinship which embraces the whole country. The patterns of institutions and ideas are uniform throughout Taleland. Yet a fundamental dogma of their collective life is that of local and sectional particularism, and of divergence within the common patterns.

The 'Real Talis'

Neither the Tongo people, nor those living in the Sie district, are considered to be real Talis; the 'real Talis' are the folk who live on and around the Tong Hills. The Great Festivals are usually cited as a decisive criterion of classification. The 'real Talis' (*Talis mɛŋa*), a Tɛnzugu elder once stated, are in the following places: Tɛnzugu, Santɛŋ, Yinduur, Sii, Gorogo, Wakii, Gbeog, and Soog, as well as the small settlements near Santɛŋ and the offshoots of Wakii at Gbambee and Woo. '*Tam tɔmərə Talis tuntuoma, ti Gɔlib ni ti Bɔyaraam*—We perform the works of Talis, our *Gɔlib* and *Bɔyaraam* festivals.' Tongo and Zoo, Yamɔlɔg and Sie, are Namoos, he continued; and Zubiuŋ and Sɔk, Ba'ari and Yayazuor, belong more closely to the Namoos than to the Talis. '*Bam tɔmərə namoorət*—They celebrate (lit. work) after the Namoo fashion, the *Giŋgaaŋ* and *Da'a* festivals.' There remain Sawalɔg, Sie-Tɛndaaŋ, Duusi, and the settlements close to them. '*Bam lɛbərə Namnam sani*—They fall in with the Namnam' (whose chief festival is called *Tɛŋən-lɛbəgət*.)[1]

[1] A brief account of one aspect of these festivals is given in my paper 'Ritual

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the former; and Biuŋ, with 25 homesteads and less than 400 inhabitants, is a peripheral settlement of the same type as Datɔk, which has over 600 homesteads and between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants. The whole of Biuŋ can be seen from one of the hummocks on which it stands, but it takes an hour's ride on horseback to get round the whole of Datɔk.

The density and distribution of habitation varies somewhat from one part of the country to another. The broad undulating plain on the north side of the Tong Hills permits of dense settlement, whereas the plain stretching south and south-east of the hills carries a relatively sparse population.[1]

Differences of altitude and of drainage probably explain this. During the rains a large part of the southern plain becomes too waterlogged for cultivation or for human habitation. Many of the Hill Talis went to live there when they were dispersed in 1911.[2] Though they have always cultivated bush farms there, wherever the lie of the land is suitable, they look back on their exile as a doubly miserable interlude on account of the uncomfortable and unhealthy conditions in which they had perforce to live. Accustomed to their well-drained hills, they hated the interminable swamp, as it seemed to them, into which the plain is transformed during the rains; and hardened though they are, they found the mosquitoes and other noxious insects that swarm there during this season an intolerable plague.

From the top of the Tong Hills, looking northwards, one has a view of what seems to be an endless plain, dotted meagrely with trees, and studded closely, as far as the eye can reach, with homesteads. They are identical in appearance, squat, circular, drab-grey or red, like the soil itself, mostly thatch-roofed, and seem to be scattered indiscriminately, some close together, others farther apart. There is nothing to indicate where one settlement ends and the next begins. Homesteads here, in the old settlements, are often no more than 20 yards apart.

The density of population is greater in the old than in the new settlements, and greater in the vicinity of the Tong Hills than in settlements nearer to the periphery. I cannot state how great the difference is, as I had neither the time nor the training for a comprehensive demographic survey. Sociological observation suggests that the amount of arable land available is an important factor, though not the only one, determining density of population in the older areas of settlement. This is as one would expect of a sedentary population of subsistence farmers. In the new settlements there is ample land, and men have large home farms immediately adjoining their homesteads, which are therefore often as

[1] I have no exact figures. From the statistics given in the census of 1931 (*Appendices containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census, Gold Coast*, Government Printer, 1932) it appears that the large area lying between Pwalɔg (Kpalɔg), the centre of the Tong Hills, and a straight line from there to the Red and White Volta—that is, this southern plain—had about 5,000 inhabitants in 1931, only one-seventh of the total population of Taleland. This included many people who were then in exile and now live on and around the Tong Hills.

[2] By order of the British Administration, after the punitive expedition against them. Cf. p. 12 above.

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much as a quarter of a mile apart. The greater congestion of the older settlements is correlated with greater fragmentation of holdings, due to the greater length of time they have been continuously occupied.

The population of Taleland, as of the remainder of the trans-Volta plateau, appears to have been increasing steadily in the recent past. In the older settlements it is clearly excessive in relation to the available land and the level of technical skill of the natives. This is the opinion both of Government officials and of the natives themselves. The natives always say that shortage of cultivable land was the main incentive for the migration of young men to the peripheral 'bush' zone in the past; and the men who have come to settle permanently in the peripheral settlements during the last two or three decades always ascribe their move from their natal settlements to the same cause. Labour migration during the past ten or fifteen years has been much influenced by pressure of population on the land in the most congested areas.

These economic adaptations of the natives and their general standard of living, as well as the territorial distribution of such clans as Mosuor biis in Taleland, compel the inference that the population has been increasing for some time. But adequate statistics for measuring the present rate of increase in the population, or for establishing its trend in the past, are lacking.[1]

There are no clear-cut geographical features regulating the distribution of homesteads in most settlements. The location of water-supplies has no bearing on it, since Tale agriculture relies wholly on rainfall, and domestic requirements are a secondary consideration, and offer no difficulties in the wet season. Towards the end of the dry season the domestic consumption of water is cut to the minimum necessary for cooking and drinking. When water is scarce, the average Talǝŋ is content to go unwashed for weeks at a stretch. By the end of the dry season most surface supplies have vanished, and water is usually obtained from shallow pits, artificially deepened and enlarged from time to time by those who use them. These pits are regular water-holes (*bulǝg*), utilized solely for that purpose throughout the year. A large settlement has several, situated in the dry beds of what are strong streams (*kolǝg*), or in the depressions (*bo'og*) which become swamps and pools during the rains. A water-hole generally serves the needs of the homesteads within a radius of about a quarter to half a mile. But at times of acute shortage the women and girls may have to go a mile or more to fill their water-pots.

Variations in elevation influence the scatter of homesteads to some extent. Inured though they are to the discomforts of their climate, the Tallensi prefer to build on high ground if possible. Thus, in the older settlements, homesteads tend to cluster closer together where there is a rise in the ground, and to be few and far between where there is a de-

[1] Reliable reproduction rates, either for the Northern Territories as a whole or for Taleland in particular, cannot be calculated from the data given in the abstract of the census of 1931, and there are no other official statistics, published or unpublished, which could be used for this purpose. My own exiguous demographic data suggest that the population of the older Tale settlements is increasing, though not steeply.

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In marked contrast is the average person's ignorance of settlements, even near at hand, with which his clan has no close social bonds or with which he has no personal links of kinship or friendship. Tallensi acquire their knowledge of geography and natural history gradually in childhood, by direct experience. It is already well established by the age of 9 or 10, and grows *pari pasu* with the expansion of the child's social space. The basis of this is the child's natal settlement, where, except for occasional visits to kinsfolk elsewhere, it spends its entire childhood. But even adults had little liberty of movement in the past, since they could hardly go unmolested in settlements unrelated to theirs by clanship or political ties or where they had no kinsfolk. Most of the older people have never been outside Taleland, and many of them have never, or only rarely, visited some of the settlements within an hour's walk of their own.

A Talǝŋ inevitably has a profound emotional attachment to his native settlement. It is striking how many Tale emigrants return home eventually after years of absence, casting aside the flesh-pots of Ashanti or the rich fields of Mampurugu. '*Kpala m-mah*—Here it is pleasant', they say, in spite of the penury of existence; for here are your kith and kin, here is the scene of your childhood joys and sorrows, and above all, the abode of your forefathers. The Talǝŋ's empirical knowledge of his habitat is the precipitate in his thought and experience of the economic and structural facts that determine the local fixity of his native settlement. His affective attachment to it finds an institutionalized expression and support in the ancestor cult.

Settlement Boundaries

The hub of Taleland is Tongo (see map on p. 15). This ancient settlement, geographically central and politically nodal in the network of interclan relations, provides a very good model of the structure of a typical Tale settlement.

As we know, the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis live in such close spatial and social propinquity with Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, and Zoo that these clans are often spoken of collectively as 'the people of Tongo (Tǝŋdɛm)'. For precision, Tongo proper is referred to as Tǝŋ-Nayiri—the Chief's House of Tongo—all over Taleland. Throughout the Mole-Dagbane-speaking region clans which hold a chiefship are thus identified by reference to it. Those which have tendaanas are sometimes called Tendaaŋ, on the same principle. Thus outsiders distinguish between Sie-Nayiri and Sie-Tendaaŋ.

Tǝŋ-Nayiri, Tongo proper, forms an irregular block of homesteads, somewhat less than three square miles in area and is one of the largest settlements in Taleland. It comprised, in 1934, 192 homesteads and a total population of about 2,400.[1] This does not include Tongo people

[1] Calculations, based on my own census samples and on figures kindly supplied to me by the A.D.C. Zuarungu, show that in Taleland the average number of people of both sexes and all ages occupying a homestead is 12 to 14. Owing to the variation in the constitution of homesteads this figure must be accepted with reserve; but it is sufficient for a rough estimate of population in a country where accurate statistics do not exist.

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living at Zoo and Gbambee, though they are an integral part of the community.

Like all Tale settlements Tongo has no fixed territorial boundaries. (See map at end of book.) Its frontiers with the circumjacent settlements take the form of a social circumference, kept in being by local, genealogical, and politico-ritual ties and cleavages. This is the line of ecological and social balance between Tongo and its neighbours, more or less stable now, but still undergoing minor readjustments as this balance changes with alterations in the internal equilibrium of any of these units. It is most stable and firm where the genealogical, political, and ideological cleavages between Tongo and its neighbours are clear-cut and dominant; it is more pervious where Tongo's structural ties with an adjacent clan have greater strength than the cleavages between them. Thus, there is a distinct though sometimes narrow territorial separation between the outermost homesteads of Tongo and those of Wakii, Soog, Gbeog, and Ba'ari. At one point on the west side of Tongo only a stretch of cultivation separates Tongo homesteads from Wakii homesteads a stone's throw away. Tongo homesteads actually lie on the Wakii side of the watercourse which might have formed a natural boundary between them. On the south this watercourse and a straggling outcrop of rocks and boulders hedge in Tongo and mark it off from Wakii. A prominent landmark here is Samoo, a mass of huge rocks overgrown with trees and scrub. It is a sacred spot, the External *Bɔyar* of Soog and Gbeog. North of Samoo lies Tongo, the nearest Tongo homestead being about 50 yards away; south of it are Wakii and Soog. It would be most unlikely for a Tongo man to build his homestead on the south side of Samoo, or for a Soog or Wakii man to live north of it. For Samoo symbolizes all that the Namoos consider alien, hostile, and to some extent repugnant, in the cultural differences and structural cleavages between themselves and the Hill Talis. In olden days the immediate vicinity of Samoo was the no-man's-land where the two groups used to meet in battle.

Soog, Wakii, Gbeog, and Ba'ari, all Talis clans that were among the traditional enemies of Tongo in war, are all demarcated from the latter. On the border between Tongo and each of these clans is a stretch of land, cultivated or uncultivated, but free of homesteads, which is still thought of as the traditional battle-ground of the two groups. It is significant that these battle-grounds are all associated with Earth or *Bɔyar* shrines under the ritual jurisdiction of the Talis clans.

By contrast it is impossible to draw a clear line between the homesteads of Tongo and those of Zubiun or Zoo. They merge completely. This corresponds to the close ties which have always existed between these three units and have enabled them to fuse easily into a single political community under the authority of the Chief of Tongo, since his acquisition of judicial and executive power under British rule.

In the old days Zubiun and Zoo always fought on the side of Tongo against the Hill Talis. Both clans have direct politico-ritual roles in connexion with the Tongo chiefship, and come into its immediate field of influence, whereas the Hill Talis and Ba'ari come into its secondary field of influence. The three clans act as *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy (cf. ch. V) to

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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or with Kuorəg. They have no greater common interests uniting them in opposition to Kuorəg. Whenever they unite for action they do so in the service of the common interests of the whole sub-clan, and this necessarily includes Kuorəg. This involves a distribution of roles and responsibilities equally amongst all four sections (Puhug, Guŋ, Seug, and Kuorəg), which places them all on a footing of equality.

Demographic factors have perhaps contributed to this development, though its determining principles lie in the structure of the maximal lineage. I estimate the total population of Kuorəg (men, women, and children), including members of the section and their families who live at Gbambee and Biuŋ, at about 400. Numerically it is considerably less than half the size of Guŋ, less than three-quarters as large as Puhug, and barely bigger than Seug. Kuorəg occupies a correspondingly smaller area than any of the other sections.

These demographic conditions have, it may be conjectured, enhanced the effect of the forces operating to maintain a balance between the segments of the maximal lineage. Looking at Tongo as unit, we may compare it with an arch which stands firm as long as the thrust and counter-thrust of its component forces are balanced. But it is a living arch, the elements of which are in a continuous process of mutual adjustment controlled by the need to maintain the equilibrium of the whole. The same principle can be seen at work in the maximal lineage and in every segment of a maximal lineage down to the smallest, and that is why Kuorəg has been forced into the position of a segment co-ordinate with the other three sections of Tongo, even though it is genealogically super-ordinate to them. This is a necessary condition of its continuing to be a part of Tongo.

The analogy of the arch is particularly pertinent to the structural equilibrium of Tongo. For whenever the four sections co-operate in a ceremonial or jural situation involving the clan as a unit, Puhug and Kuorəg are grouped together in contraposition to Guŋ and Seug, also grouped together. It is shown in small things as well as big things. When, for instance, the beast offered at an important sacrifice or ceremonially slaughtered at a funeral is to be flayed, the elders of each section, as befits their equality of status in the maximal lineage, select two of their younger co-members to do the flaying. Then Puhug and Kuorəg take the left flank, Guŋ and Seug the right; the titbits (*siit-numɔt*), which are the perquisite of the skinners, are divided equally between the two sides. Similarly at the initial divination for the Harvest Festival, Puhug and Kuorəg take one calabash of flour-water (*zɔm kuɔm*), Guŋ and Seug the other. Whenever the elders of all the sections gather in the chief's *zɔŋ*, that is how they sit—Puhug and Kuorəg on one side, Guŋ and Seug on the other.

The corporate activities and common interests in which the unity and solidarity of a maximal lineage are manifested vary according to the range of segments they mobilize and the degree to which participation in them is obligatory. Funerals and marriages are typical of situations in which there is a variable field of corporate action. Rights and duties associated with them are graded in accordance with lineage distance. The age,

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

134 difficult. In areas where the flow of storm water is particularly swift, the top soil has been completely scoured away, leaving bare expanses of sub-soil. Where this has occurred close to roads, the rapid run-off results in considerable damage. After a very heavy rain sections of the road may be washed completely away. (An example of this occurred in August, 1936, on the road between Bolgatanga and Zuarungu.)

Primitive Nature of the People.

105 The people of North Mamprusi are divided into a number of tribes; they differ in their customs and speak different dialects of Mole, but their methods of living and farming are the same. They are all primitive pagans, with simple requirements. Little or no dress is worn other than a goatskin by men, and leaves or string by the women. There is no indigenous cotton industry, and cotton goods, which are increasingly worn to-day, especially around market centres, are all imported or manufactured by strangers, generally Moshis, in the Zongos.

Absence of Villages.

361 An important feature of the district is that the people live in scattered compounds, unlike the Dagombas and South Mamprusis who live in villages and hamlets. The distance between compounds varies considerably; at one time it was probably about the length of a good arrow shot, but closer building around centres of importance, as near markets and lorry termini, is resulting in the formation of towns. This can be seen at places like Bolgatanga, and near Government stations. Each compound resembles a miniature fort and in the past there is little doubt that it served as such: it is roughly elliptical in shape and consists of a number of round mud houses opening inwards; and the whole is enclosed by a high mud wall. Roofs are made either flat, of beaten mud, or conical, and thatched. A single narrow doorway, which can be heavily barricaded, gives entrance to the compound: the space in-
[231] side is divided into compartments by low walls. Livestock are kept
[241] in an open compartment near the entrance. The land lying between compounds is farmed intensively and manuring forms a definite part of the farming system.

Fixed Cultivation.

●[161] The high density of population necessitates a system of
241 "fixed" cultivation. It is difficult to say whether the need for "fixed" cultivation resulted in the people living on their land in